

An Old Ballad of WHITTINGTON and his CAT.

Tune of, Come thou to Me.



HERE I must tell the praise of worthy Whittington,
Known to be in his days Lord-Mayor of London.
But of poor parents born was he, we hear,
And in his youth brought up in Somersetshire
Poorly then up to London came this simple lad,
And with a merchant soon a dwelling had :
And in the kitchen plac'd, a scullion for to be,
And a long time he pass'd his labour druggingly.
His daily labour was turning spits at the fire,
To scour pots for a poor scullion's hire.
Meat and drink his pay, of coin he had no store,
And to run away in secret thus he bore :



So from the merchant Whittington secretly
Into the country run, to purchase liberty.
But as he went along in a fine summer's morn,
London bells sweetly rung, Turn again Whittington
Evermore sounding so, Turn again Whittington,
For thou in time shalt be Lord-mayor of London,
Whereupon back came Whittington with speed,
A servant to remain, as the Lord had decreed.
Still blessed be the bells, this was the daily song,
That my Good fortune tell ; most sweetly have
they rung.
If God so favours me, I will not be unkind,
London my Love shall see, and my bounty find.

But for this happy chance, this scullion had a cat,
That did his fame advance, and him wealth go.
Whittington had no more but his poor cat then,
Which to the ship he bore like a valiant man.
Venturing the same, says he, I may get store of gold,
And the Mayor of London be, the bells have me told
Whittington's merchandize carried unto the land,
Troubled with rats and mice as we do understand,
The king who there reign'd, as at dinner sat,
Daily in fear remain'd of many a mouse and rat :
Meat that in trenchers lay, no way could they keep
safe,



But by rats torn away, fearing no whip or staff.
Hereupon they brought, Whittington's fine cat,
By the king was bought, heaps of gold given for that.
Home again they hie, with their ship laden so,
Whittington's wealth by his cat began to go.

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A scullions life he forsook, to be a merchant good,
And soon began to look how his credit stood.
After he was chose Sheriff of the city hear,
And then quickly rose, as it doth appear.
For the citys grace, Sir Richard Whittington,
Came to be in his days thrice Lord Mayor of London.
His Fame to advance, thousands he lent the king,
To maintain war in France, glory from thence to bring.
And after a feast, which he the King did make,
He burnt the note in Jest, and would no money take,
Prisoners cherish'd were, widows comfort found,
Good deeds far and near by him were done,
Whittington's College is one of his charities,
Newgate he built, where many prisoner lies.
Many more deeds were done by Whittington,
Which joy and comfort being to those that look on
Somerset, thou hast bred the flower of charity,
Altho' he's dead and gone, yet he lives lastingly.
Call him back no more to live in London,
Those bells that call'd him back, Turn again
Whittington.

